

IT DOESN'T QUACK LIKE A DUCK

they're down on kurt vonnegut
for writing bestsellers,

and yet his novels don't look
like bestsellers to me. they're kind
of weird and disjointed and playful
and they aren't even patriotic
and they certainly aren't overly
optimistic.

i'm sure kurt vonnegut likes
to make a lot of money,
but can you blame a guy
if he writes books that are not like
anybody else's bestsellers
and they become bestsellers anyway?

FEAST OR FAMINE: MULTIPLE GUESS

tonight at nine
i had the choice of watching
the mysterious stranger of mark twain,
starting over by dan wakefield,
return to the planet of the apes,
or the go-between, adapted by harold pinter,
from a novel by e. p. hartley,
and directed by joseph losey,
starring julie christie and, of course,
the man who has appeared in every british film
since 1950,

alan bates.

the choice i made told me
a lot about myself.

A VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

i'm drinking beer with three young guys
and one of them is ready to kill himself
because his girlfriend
is out with another guy

and his buddy says,
"how can you be pissed off at her,
when you were just hitting on that blonde
in here yesterday afternoon?"

and i say, "he can be pissed off
because he's a man."

the place gets as quiet as if
e. f. hutton were pontificating,

but the silence is no testimony
to the esteem in which my opinions are held --

it's in astonishment that anyone would
publically promulgate a double-standard
(one favoring the male, that is)
in our enlightened era.

of course the statistics say
that more young wives now fuck around
than young husbands.

and i suspect this is one time
that the statistics do not lie.

THE LOST DECADE

a friend and colleague comes to
the door of my office to see
if i have time to read over
his younger daughter's senior thesis.
i've known her since she was a child
and i say, "that's not a bad idea,
having senior thesis in high school.
she must attend a good one."
"oh no," he says, "she's graduating from college."

i think it's time i embark on the research
for my senior citizen's thesis.

MY NEW SHOES

i had to go to three shoestores
before finding a single pair
in sasquatch size -- 12 E.

the pair i finally slipped like cinderfella
into cost me nearly fifty bucks which i can't
afford, and they're so light and comfy
that they'll no doubt wear thin soon.
but for now they are as exquisitely
comforting and sensitive
as the most expensive of prophylactics.